Minutes of the Meeting of Open Spaces held in Rickards Hall on 15 June 2026 at 7:30 pm

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Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge, Angela Baker *(Chairwoman)*, Sarah Compton, Carey Jacques, Alan Layland, Stuart McGregor, Michael Stockdale *(Vice-Chairman)*, Stephen Sumner

In attendance: Open Spaces Officer and Facilities Manager. There were six members of the public and no press

The meeting started at 19:30

1 Elections of Chairman and Vice Chairman for the ensuing year

1.1 Election of Chairman

Cllr Baker requested nominations for the role of Committee Chairman. Cllr Layland proposed Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr McGregor. There being no other nominations, it was unanimously,

Resolved: that Cllr Baker be elected Committee Chairman for the ensuing year.

1.2 Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Baker requested nominations for the role of Committee Vice-Chairman, and from the Chair proposed Cllr Stockdale, seconded by Cllr Compton. There being no other nominations, it was unanimously,

Resolved: that Cllr Stockdale be elected Committee Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received, noted and accepted from Cllr Gemmell Smith.

3 Declarations of Interests, or Predeterminations

Cllr Jacques declared an interest in The Edenbridge Bonfire Society.

4 Public Questions

Chair closed the meeting 19:33

A member of the public spoke on behalf of Together and Giving in relation to item 12 on the agenda. They spoke about the background of the organisation and what they do, along with providing information regarding the proposed dog show.

Another member of the public spoke on behalf of the Edenbridge Bonfire Society in relation to item 13 on the agenda. They provided additional information regarding the bonfire flags, who would be decorating them, how many flags they intended to have and that there was confirmed interest from local business regarding sponsorship.

Finally, a member of the public spoke on behalf of Edenbridge Allotment Garden Association regarding item 10.5.1 on the agenda. They confirmed that they had been experiencing ongoing vandalism and why extra fencing was required.

Chair opened the meeting 19:42

The Chairman proposed to bring forward agenda items 10.5.1, 12 and 13 for discussion following the procedural items, as there were representatives from the public present. Members agreed unanimously and,

***Resolved:** to bring forward items 10.5.1, 12 and 13 to be discussed before proceeding with other items on the agenda. Details are minuted sequentially to follow the agenda order.*

5 To receive, approve and sign the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 13 April 2026 (pages 2023-134/1-7).

Resolved: that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee 13 April 2026 be signed by the Chair

as a true and accurate record of the meeting (pages 2023-134/1-7).

6 To Receive Analysis of Receipts and Payments to 10 June 2026

Members noted the income and expenditure from 1 April 2025 to 10 June 2026.

Members had no comments

7 To Ratify Operational Decisions for Open Spaces Activity

None

8 Correspondence

Members noted that a resident had contacted the office to express concerns about the fun fairs held in Stangrove Park. She stated that these events caused disturbance to residents, attracted undesirable individuals, and created an environment where she believed young people, particularly teenage girls, were vulnerable. She criticised the Community Safety Unit and Kent Police for what she perceived as a lack of monitoring and enforcement at these events.

She also raised concerns about damage to the park caused by heavy vehicles, alleged poor food hygiene standards (although the cited food poisoning incident had related to another non-Council event rather than the fun fair), and the impact on public enjoyment of the park, arguing that such events restricted access to green space for residents wishing to relax or socialise.

There were no other complaints or concerns raised about the fun fair.

9 Facilities Manager Report

Members received and noted the Facilities Manger's report including the following:

- The Grounds and Facilities Team continued to carry out routine seasonal maintenance across Council sites, including grass cutting, weed control, planting, watering, shrub pruning, football pitch marking, and cemetery maintenance.
- Remedial works identified during the annual playground inspections were completed, including repairs at Stangrove Park. A Pitch Inspection Report was submitted for the Council's football pitches, and opportunities to secure funding for new grounds maintenance machinery continued to be explored.
- The annual COSHH review and tractor service were completed. While no significant issues were identified with the tractor, replacement tyres were recommended, with quotations to be obtained for consideration at the September meeting.
- The summer planting programme was completed across the town, and building maintenance works were undertaken at Doggetts Barn and Rickards Hall.
- Improvements were also made within the Cemetery, including the installation of new memorial plinths adjacent to the Wall of Remembrance. Further enhancement works to the paved area were being planned.

9.1 To approve the expenditure of £215.00 for a replacement telescope for the Recreation Ground Playground

The telescope located within the children's play area at The Recreation Ground had been damaged beyond economical repair and required replacement to maintain the quality and play value of the equipment. Members,

Resolved: to approve expenditure of £215.00 for the purchase of a replacement telescope.

9.2 Tree Maintenance - Forge Green

The Council had received a report from a resident regarding the condition of a tree on Forge Green that adjoined their property. Concerns were raised about the health of the tree and the potential risk presented by deadwood within the canopy.

A preliminary visual inspection undertaken by Council staff identified a number of dead branches within the crown. Professional advice and a quotation for any recommended remedial works were requested from the Council's approved tree contractor.

Members were presented with a quote to fell the diseased ash tree and grind the resulting stump at a cost of £650.00 excluding VAT. Members,

Resolved: to approve the expenditure of £650.00 plus VAT to fell the diseased ash tree and grind the resulting stump on Forge Green.

10 Open Spaces Business

Members noted the Open Spaces business, including the following:

- The children's fun fair took place at Stangrove Park and was well attended, with the site remaining clean and tidy throughout the hire period.
- A new bench was installed in the Market Yard Car Park following a resident's request, with positive feedback received from residents.
- The biannual tree survey and annual playground inspections were commissioned, with the tree survey ongoing and playground inspections scheduled for all sites except Marsh Green, where replacement works were planned.
- The summer hanging baskets were installed, the Edenbridge Gardens in Bloom competition was launched, and judging for the South and South East in Bloom competition took place.
- Following the appointment of a contractor, works commenced on the former Police Station land, and the Jubilee Clock was serviced.

10.1 To receive the Burial Report

Members noted the following burial report:

April: 1 burial; 0 ashes interments.

May: 1 burial; 1 ashes interment.

June (to date): 1 burial; 0 ashes interments.

10.2 To receive an update on the external appraisal of the Thursday Market carried out by a NABMA market specialist

Members noted that an external market sector specialist from the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) had undertaken an independent review of Edenbridge Market following approval at the January meeting. The review included a site visit and discussions with Council officers.

The resulting report, which had been circulated to Members, outlined findings and recommendations to support the future development of the market. Officers advised that the visit had been beneficial, with a number of ideas identified. It was noted that the Communications Officer would consider the social media recommendations, and that a traders' newsletter had been prepared incorporating several of the report's suggestions.

10.3 Cemetery Regulations and Fees Booklet

Members received the updated Cemetery Regulations and Fees Booklet. It was noted that the booklet retained the existing regulations while incorporating previously agreed amendments and an improved layout. Members also noted the proposed printing format and the minor presentational amendments to be made prior to publication. Members,

Resolved: to approve the booklet, subject to the minor presentational amendments outlined in the report.

10.4 To consider removing the unofficial disabled space lines in the MYCP walkway

The MYCP walkway contained an unofficial disabled parking space marked with parking bay lines. There were several designated disabled parking spaces available within the main car park, as well as additional on street parking nearby. The walkway area had the potential to be used for markets and other community events, and the bay markings might have restricted its flexibility for such uses.

Members discussed the proposal at length. Whilst some Members supported the removal of the unofficial disabled parking bay markings to provide greater flexibility for markets and community events, others questioned whether the change would provide any significant benefit and expressed concern about the potential impact on accessibility. It was noted that there were designated disabled parking spaces available within the main car park, and Members agreed that, should any future changes be considered, clear signage directing users to the official disabled bays would be important.

Following discussion, Members,

Resolved: to confirm that the newly installed bollards should be trialled before any decision was made to remove the parking bay markings. It was also agreed that officers should investigate the relevant access requirements and bring the matter back to a future meeting for further consideration.

10.5 Allotment Matters

10.5.1 To consider Edenbridge Allotment Garden Association (EAGA) request to install 25m of extra fencing to discourage trespassing and the expenditure of £632.14

The Edenbridge Allotment Gardens Association (EAGA) Plot Officer met with Kent Police in May to discuss the ongoing issues of trespass and vandalism at the Forge Croft allotment site. Following that meeting, it was recommended that an additional run of 1.8m high chestnut paling fencing be installed approximately 60cm inside the existing boundary fence in the area that was used to gain unauthorised access to the site from Skinners Farm.

The proposed additional fencing would extend for approximately 25 metres. The Facilities Manager had obtained a quotation for the required materials, which totalled £632.14. Members,

Resolved: to approve the the installation of additional fencing at the Forge Croft Allotments and the expenditure of £632.14.

10.5.2 To review and approve amendments to the EAGA Forge Croft Allotment site rules

The new EAGA committee have made some small adjustments to their site rules for the Forge Croft Allotments which was circulated to Members. Members,

Resolved: to approve the amendments to the EAGA Forge Croft Allotment site rules.

10.6 Byelaws review - To consider further comments received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) regarding the Council's proposed revised byelaws

Members received an update on the latest feedback from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) regarding the Council's draft byelaws. It was noted that, following further review, MHCLG had requested clarification on the inclusion of certain land within the Schedule of Grounds and on several clauses. The Town Clerk outlined the proposed amendments to address these comments, including revisions to the Schedule of Grounds and minor drafting changes, while retaining Clause 15 relating to cycling.

Following consideration, Members,

Resolved: to approve all four recommendations:

1. Noted the comments received from MHCLG.

2. Approved the amendments to the draft byelaws as outlined in the report.

3. Approved the revised draft byelaws for resubmission to MHCLG.

4. Delegated authority to the Town Clerk to make any minor amendments required by MHCLG prior to final approval.

10.7 To consider the purchase of two new waste bins for Council owned open spaces at a total cost of £1,149.98 plus VAT

At the January 2026, two new waste bins were approved by Members and ordered for Stangrove Park and the newly acquired former Police Station site. A number of other litter bins located across Council owned sites were approaching the end of their operational life and would require replacement due to age, wear and deterioration.

It was proposed that the Council purchase two additional replacement bins to continue a programme of renewal, ensuring that waste disposal facilities across Council open spaces remained safe, functional and fit for purpose. Members,

Resolved: to approve the purchase of two new replacement waste bins at a total cost of £1,149.98 plus VAT.

11 Capital Projects

11.1 Bandstand Project – progress update

Members received an update on the Bandstand Project at Stangrove Park. It was noted that, following the appointment of contractors, preparatory work had progressed to support the planning application, which was required as the proposed structure exceeded permitted development height limits. The proposed location of the bandstand, together with the associated landscaping, drainage and access arrangements, had been agreed, and professional planning documentation was being prepared. The Town Clerk sought clarification from Sevenoaks District Council regarding the eligibility of professional fees associated with the planning application process to be funded through the approved Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation. Sevenoaks District Council subsequently confirmed that the fees were eligible.

Following discussions between the Town Clerk, the Chair of the Council and Committee, and officers, it had been agreed that the planning application should be submitted after 31 July 2026 in order to avoid the requirement for a BNG assessment.

Members were advised that ecological surveys would be undertaken to support the application and that, by submitting the application after 31 July 2026, the project would avoid the requirement for a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, resulting in a potential cost saving. It was further noted that contractors had been instructed not to commence manufacture or installation until planning permission had been granted. Members,

Resolved: to approve all three recommendations:

1. Received and noted the update.

2. Ratified the appointment of Turner & Hoskin to prepare the planning application documentation at an estimated cost of £715 plus VAT, together with OS mapping costs of £28 plus VAT.

3. Ratified the appointment of aLyne Ecology Ltd to undertake the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Habitat Condition Assessment at a cost of £765 plus VAT.

11.2 To consider shortlisted tenders and confirm a contractor for the Marsh Green Playground project

Members considered the outcome of the tender process for the Marsh Green Playground replacement project. It was noted that 23 companies had requested tender documentation, 12 had attended site visits, and 11 completed tenders had been received. Following evaluation by officers and the Open Spaces Projects Working Group, two tenders were shortlisted based on their suitability for the site, play value, aesthetics, durability and value for money.

Members considered both proposals, including the proposed amendments to both designs and, following discussion,

Resolved: to confirm Tender 1 (Kompan) as the preferred contractor for the Marsh Green Playground improvement project along with the suggested ammendemnts.

12 To receive a request from Together and Giving to hold an Edenbridge Dog Show in Stangrove Park

A request had been received from Together and Giving to hold an Edenbridge Dog Show in Stangrove Park on 25 July.

Members were advised that Together and Giving is a newly established community organisation promoting resource sharing, community events and volunteer support across Edenbridge and the surrounding area. The organisation had agreed to organise the event after being approached by a local resident who lacked the necessary public liability insurance and volunteer support. Together and Giving confirmed that its insurance policy would provide appropriate cover for the event.

The proposed event would be a traditional dog show only, with no agility or obstacle activities. The organisers confirmed that dangerous dogs would not be permitted and that appropriate safety measures would be in place. The volunteer team included an experienced Championship Dog Show Judge, local dog day-care owners and professional dog walkers.

Members noted that the event would be free to attend, with organisers intending to meet costs independently. Supporting documentation, including the safeguarding policy, risk assessment, hire agreement and site plan, had been provided. Members,

Resolved: to approve the request from Together and Giving to hold a dog show in Stangrove Park on 25 July subject to subject to evidence of appropriate insurance and,

Resolved: to confirm that there will be no hire charge for a community event. Members also suggested creating a policy regarding the hire of Stangrove Park by community or volunteer groups to be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

13 To consider request from the Edenbridge Bonfire Society to temporarily install medieval style flags along the High Street

Cllr Jacques left the meeting at 19:50

The Edenbridge Bonfire Society had requested permission to temporarily install a series of medieval style flags along the High Street as part of their bonfire celebrations. The flags were to be erected approximately three weeks prior to the event and removed the following week.

The proposed flags were to be attached to the existing hanging basket brackets. As the hanging baskets were scheduled to be removed in early to mid October (weather permitting), there should have been no conflict between the two installations.

For Members' consideration, the Bonfire Society's proposal and risk assessment were circulated. Members discussed the proposal and,

Resolved: to grant permission for the Edenbridge Bonfire Society to temporarily install medieval style flags on the existing hanging basket brackets along the High Street, in accordance with the submitted proposal and risk assessment, for the period requested surrounding the bonfire event.

Cllr Jacques re-joined the meeting at 19:53 following the discussion of item 13

14 Rugby Club requests

14.1 To consider the Rugby Club's request to hold an annual car boot sale

Members were advised that during the 2026 annual lease meeting with Edenbridge Rugby Club (ERC), the Club confirmed its intention to hold a trial car boot sale during the summer period. ERC advised that, should the trial prove successful, it may seek to establish the car boot sale as an annual event.

Car boot sales also fell under the market licensing policy. A reminder that under clause 6 of the policy, it says: In respect of community-based markets it is proposed that an administration fee be waived for single market events, and where there are regular events (three or more per year) a fee of £25 is paid to cover the Council's administrative costs. Members considered the request and,

Resolve: to support ERC undertaking the trial car boot sale this summer, with any future annual event remaining subject to the appropriate approvals and permissions. Members also confirmed to waive the market licence fees as a community event.

14.2 To consider Rugby Club request for the creation of an additional rugby pitch within an area of the Recreation Ground that is not currently included within their lease

The Rugby Club had requested Committee approval in principle for the creation of an additional rugby pitch within an area of The Recreation Ground that was not included within their lease.

The proposed pitch would have been a smaller training/children's pitch, primarily intended for junior rugby activities and coaching sessions. The Facilities Manager had reviewed the proposal and, subject to the submission of satisfactory plans, had raised no concerns regarding the principle of the additional pitch.

At the time of the meeting, the Rugby Club had not provided updated plans showing the proposed location and dimensions of the pitch. Members,

Resolved: to approve the proposal in principle, subject to the Rugby Club submitting plans that are acceptable to the Council.

15 To consider informal gatherings and hire agreement thresholds for events in Stangrove Park

Members were asked to consider whether the Council should introduce a threshold for when informal gatherings in Stangrove Park require a formal hire agreement and payment of the approved hire fees.

This followed a request from a resident seeking clarification over whether a formal booking was required for a small private picnic gathering involving family, friends and several local families. The resident advised that the gathering would have been informal in nature, with no commercial activity, no large structures, minimal equipment, low-level background music and a commitment to leave the site clean and tidy.

At the time of the meeting, the Council did not have a defined limit on the size or nature of gatherings that triggered the requirement for a hire agreement. Members discussed this and,

Resolved: that Officers should create an informal gatherings policy for Council owned open spaces to be brought back to a future meeting for consideration. For the particular request in question, Members,

Resolved: to approve the gathering and that a formal agreement was not required.

16 Streetlights maintenance replacement programme

16.1 Streetlights maintenance replacement programme: 2026-27 Update

Members received an update on the 2026–27 streetlight replacement programme.

It was noted that, in November 2025, the Committee had approved funding through the 30-Year Maintenance Plan for the replacement of the remaining two steel columns and four 1985 concrete columns. Members were also reminded that the replacement of 10 columns on Cedar Drive and Park Avenue would be funded through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, with the CIL Board having approved an allocation of £40,000 in December towards these works.

Members were advised that the 2026–27 replacement programme included five ageing steel columns and 10 concrete columns on the Stangrove Estate. Quotations from UK Power Networks were being obtained, and the 2026–27 budget for the 30-Year Maintenance Plan had been reduced from £25,000 to £15,000 to reflect the CIL funding allocation.

The current list of proposed streetlight replacements, subject to costs remaining within the approved budget, was noted.

Members had no questions.

16.2 To note: Kent County Council additional signage on Council streetlights 53 and 54 on Four Elms Road

Members were advised that Kent County Council Highways had recently undertaken works to improve signage at the bridge on Four Elms Road. This had included the installation of illuminated bridge height warning signs to improve visibility and road safety.

To facilitate the installation, Kent County Council requested permission to attach the signs to Streetlights 53 and 54 for power supply purposes. The Town Clerk approved this request. Members,

Ratified: the permission for signage on streetlights 53 and 54 for warning signage.

17 Land Registry Notice - Application for Registration by Adverse Possession (Title No. TT189609) - land at the Water Meadows, west of Mill Hill

Members considered a Notice of an Application for Registration of a Person in Adverse Possession (Form B149) received from HM Land Registry in respect of land lying to the west of Mill Hill, Edenbridge (Title No. TT189609).

It was noted that the application had been submitted by the Trustees of the Great Stone Bridge Trust of Edenbridge in relation to land forming part of the Water Meadows. Members received the accompanying HM Land Registry Notice, plan, Council land title register (Title No. K838805) and supporting statutory declaration, which outlined the historic occupation, management and leasing of the land by the Great Stone Bridge Trust, its predecessors and lessees.

Members noted that the land subject to the application adjoined land owned by Edenbridge Town Council at the Bund (Title No. K838805) and also ran alongside the Recreation Ground (Title Nos. K424487 and K524656), separated by the stream. It was further noted that, having reviewed the application and supporting information, there appeared to be no basis on which the Council would object to the registration application. Members,

Resolved: to confirm that the Council had no objection to the application for registration by adverse possession, authorised the Town Clerk to complete and return the Land Registry consent form on behalf of the Council, and approved the Chair of the Council to sign the consent form as required.

18 News Release

None

19 Date of next meeting - 21 September 2026

Members noted the date of the next meeting,

The meeting ended at 20.45